

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Fort Hood victims' families to receive Texas veterans benefits**

Patterson changing rules for those whose blood spilled on Texas soil while in service

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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AUSTIN — Rejecting the notion the soldiers killed by a Jihadist mass murderer in Fort Hood were victims of workplace violence, Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson today announced Texas will treat their spouses as if they were killed in combat.

“This wasn’t workplace violence — these were casualties of war and we’re going to change the rules to give these families full access to VLB benefits,” said Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson, who serves as chairman of the Veterans Land Board. “We’ll let the lawyers work out the details, but I intend to make sure we honor their sacrifice.”

Texas veterans benefits are the best in the nation. To qualify for VLB benefits, veterans must be honorably discharged, must have served at least 90 days of active duty and must live in Texas. Patterson has ordered VLB staff attorneys to sort out how an exception may be made for the Fort Hood victims.

“Each of the active and retired military members who died in the Fort Hood terrorist attack lost their life while assigned to duty in Texas or in support of the military in Texas,” Patterson said. “They were physically on duty in Texas and chose to remain until the time of their death in defense of both the citizens of the United States and Texas. Like Travis and Crockett, their spilled blood remains forever intermingled with Texas soil. Their surviving spouses who are residents of Texas at the time of application should be eligible for VLB programs.”

Texas has always taken care of her veterans. In 1836, the Texas General Land Office was formed, in part, to make sure veterans of the Texas Revolution were given land rights they were promised in exchange for their role in liberating Texas. In 1946, the Texas Veterans Land Board was created to do the same for Texan veterans of a different war who helped liberate the world. Today, the Texas Veterans Land Board serves more than 1.7 million Texas veterans of all ages.

The cornerstone of Texas veterans’ benefits is the VLB’s ability to offer below-market interest rate loans for land and home purchases, as well as for home improvements. The VLB operates eight Texas State Veterans Homes that serve more than a thousand veterans and their families needing long-term, high-quality care. The VLB also provides four dignified places of rest for the free burial of veterans with full military honors at Texas State Veterans Cemeteries in Abilene, Corpus Christi, Killeen and Mission.

“No other state can match what the VLB offers: low-cost home, land and home improvement loans; skilled nursing long-term care facilities and cemeteries — all

exclusively for Texas veterans or their spouses,” Patterson said. “And all of our programs are self-funding, which is good news for Texas taxpayers.”

For more information on Texas Veterans Land Board home, land and home improvement loans; Texas State Veterans Homes; or Texas State Veterans Cemeteries, call 1-800-252-VETS (1-800-252-8387), or visit [www.texasveterans.com](http://www.texasveterans.com).

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